

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
December 5 - 12, 2012

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1. [National Intelligence Council Forecasts Megatrends](#) (12-11-2012)

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11, 2012 – The American Century is drawing to a close, and the U.S. Defense Department will have to be more flexible in dealing with a faster-paced multipolar world, according to the Global Trends 2030 report released yesterday.

The National Intelligence Council has looked to the future to jumpstart the conversation about what U.S. policy should be, given world-wide trends.

In the annual report, the NIC makes its best guesses about several “megatrends” that will shape the world in 2030.

The first is individual empowerment. The council believes there will be a significant decrease in poverty in the world and a concomitant increase in the middle class. The council says this represents a “tectonic shift,” as for the first time in history “a majority of the world’s population will not be impoverished.”

The NIC expects the global economy to expand and the new members of the middle class will be able to harness new communications and manufacturing technologies.

The council sees this megatrend as the key to solving global challenges over the next 15 to 20 years. But the results of this expanded economy aren't all rosy. The trend could also give individuals and small groups access to lethal and disruptive technologies and capabilities once only held by nation states.

The second megatrend NIC predicts is the diffusion of power. The council posits that by 2030, Asia will surpass the West in gross domestic production, population size, military spending and technology investment. If this occurs, China would become the world's largest economy, with India and Brazil close behind. Other rising nations could include Colombia, Indonesia, Nigeria, South Africa and Turkey, while Russia, Europe and Japan could continue their declines.

But, according to the council, more important than who is up or down is that the nature of power will change. "Enabled by communications technologies, power will shift toward multifaceted and amorphous networks that will form to influence state and global actions," the report says. Countries unable to understand or use these new technologies "will not be able to punch their weight."

Demographic changes will transform the world of 2030, the report said. NIC estimates that the world population will grow from 7.1 billion today to 8.3 billion in 2030. Aging, migration and urbanization will push this megatrend. Its most noticeable manifestation will be the continued growth of cities, the report predicts, spurring economic growth, but potentially straining food and water resources.

The report said developing countries could become demographically "older," while the demand for labor drives migration. "Owing to rapid urbanization in the developing world, the volume of urban construction ... over the next 40 years could roughly equal the entire volume of such construction to date in world history," the report says.

Finally, NIC predicts that "demand for food, water and energy will grow by approximately 35, 40 and 50 percent respectively." The growing population and expanded middle class will trigger that growth, the report said.

At the same time, the council wrote, climate change will accelerate, amplifying existing weather patterns -- meaning that wet areas become wetter and dry areas become drier. The council said this does not necessarily mean a world of scarcity, but stressed that world leaders must collaborate to tackle the problem.

Related Sites:

[National Intelligence Council](#)
[NIC Global Trends](#)

2. Afghanistan Advances toward Full Security Responsibility in 2014 (12-11-2012)

By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. and coalition forces and their Afghan partners blunted an insurgent offensive during the 2012 summer fighting season and advanced toward the goal of putting the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in full control of security by the end of 2014, a Defense Department report says.

"The transition process is on track for completion by the end of 2014," the report said. The latest semiannual *Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, issued in December, assessed progress from April through September 2012.

“More than three-quarters of the Afghan population currently live in areas where the ANSF are transitioning to security lead, with areas in all 34 provinces now in some stage of transition,” the report said.

The report added that the Afghan security forces now are unilaterally conducting approximately 80 percent of all operations and are starting to expand security independently in areas where the U.S. and coalition forces do not have an established presence.

“The insurgency was unable to re-take significant territory during the reporting period, despite stating this as one of its chief goals during the fighting season,” the report said. Nevertheless, the insurgency is resilient and not likely to be defeated decisively in the near term, the report concludes.

The Taliban generally wage armed struggle during the spring, summer and early fall, then retreat to sanctuaries where they pass the brutal winters.

Although the insurgents have been weakened since 2010, they remain dangerous. The Defense Department document describes them as determined and predicts they will try to regain lost ground and influence through continued assassinations, intimidation, high-profile attacks and the use of improvised explosive devices. Commenting on insider attacks on U.S. and coalition forces, the report said countermeasures have been taken to stop them, and the number of attacks has dropped off sharply from the peak in August, but it will take time to know how thoroughly the countermeasures have worked.

“The insurgency’s safe havens in Pakistan, the limited institutional capacity of the Afghan government and endemic corruption remain the greatest risks to long-term stability and sustainable security in Afghanistan,” the report added.

The report noted that U.S. relations with Pakistan have begun to improve following the reopening of international supply routes between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The report added that cross-border cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan has shown “nascent improvement.”

Looking to the future, the report noted that the United States, its coalition partners and other members of the international community will remain engaged with Afghanistan after the transfer of security responsibility two years from now.

It pointed to the strategic partnership agreement signed by President Obama and Afghan President Hamid Karzai in May 2012. The United States committed to continuing to support Afghanistan’s social and economic development, long-term security, good governance and regional cooperation. In return, the Afghan government committed to strengthening accountability, transparency and the protection of human rights.

In July 2012, the international community gathered in Tokyo to define its pledge of support for Afghanistan through 2025. At the end of the conference, the international community announced that it will provide \$16 billion for Afghanistan through 2015 and set measurable reform goals to improve Afghan governance, rule of law, anti-corruption efforts and development performance.

Related Sites:

[Report Notes Progress, Remaining Challenges in Afghanistan](#) (12-10-2012)

[Official: Safer Afghanistan Moves Away From Taliban](#) (12-10-2012)

[Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan](#) (Full text)

3. Panetta Calls Kuwait Important U.S. Partner (12-11-2012)

By Cheryl Pellerin
American Forces Press Service

KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait, Dec. 11, 2012 – On his first official visit to Kuwait, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta said today that the nation is an important partner with a longstanding U.S. bilateral defense partnership.

More than 13,500 U.S. forces serve in Kuwait, the secretary told reporters traveling with him. The last visit to Kuwait by a U.S. defense secretary was almost five years ago, he added.

Kuwait is strategically located at the head of the Persian Gulf between Iraq and Saudi Arabia. The United States and Kuwait “share a history of cooperation that goes back to the first Gulf War,” Panetta said, “and I look forward to discussing with the government of Kuwait how can we enhance that partnership in the face of regional security challenges in the area.”

Together, U.S. and Kuwaiti troops conduct security cooperation activities and are involved in joint exercises and training, the secretary said.

“Our presence in Kuwait and throughout the Gulf helps enhance the capabilities of partner nations, deters aggression and helps ensure that we’re better able to respond to crises in the region,” Panetta added.

The new U.S. defense strategy makes clear the United States will maintain a force presence in the Middle East, he said, and the department is maintaining a very strong and flexible presence there.

With nearly 50,000 U.S. troops in the region, the United States is in a position to be able to respond to any contingency that arises there, the secretary said.

“Kuwait,” he added, “plays a critical role in our ability to do that.”

Panetta said one of the main reasons for the trip is to visit troops during the holiday season, “and to express on behalf of the nation our best wishes for the holidays to all of them.”

It’s a tough time of year to be away from loved ones, he added.

“Since 9/11, so many have spent so many holidays away from home, the secretary said. “I want them to hear directly from me how much I appreciate their dedication, their commitment, their sacrifice and their willingness to put their lives on the line to keep our country safe so far away from their families.

“Our hope,” he added, “is that ultimately, one day soon, they can be home with their families for Christmas.”

Biographies:
[Leon E. Panetta](#)

Related Sites:
[State Department Fact Sheet on Kuwait](#)
[Photo Essay: Panetta Meets With Kuwaiti Leaders](#)
[Special: Travels with Panetta](#)

Related Articles:
[Carter Arrives in Kuwait, Meets With U.S. Embassy Officials](#)
[Carter Gives Thanks to U.S. Troops in Kuwait](#)

4. U.S. Government Assistance for Syria (12-10-2012)

The United States continues to support the Syrian people as the newly-formed Syrian Opposition Coalition sets a course toward the start of the peaceful, democratic, inclusive future that the people of Syria deserve. Assistance includes our vigorous diplomatic support of the newly formed Syrian Opposition Coalition, humanitarian assistance to help those affected by the conflict, and non-lethal support for local councils and civil society inside Syria.

- The United States supports the Syrian people's aspirations for Syrian-led transition to a more just, inclusive, and peaceful Syria. We are working with likeminded states to further isolate the regime and support the Syrian people's calls for Asad to depart from power. An estimated 40,000 Syrians have been killed over the past 20 months of unrest and violence, and the regime's legitimacy has completely collapsed. The United States and the like-minded countries are supporting the Syrian Opposition Coalition's efforts to advance a political transition in Syria and helping the Syrian people pursue a democratic transition.
- In partnership with the United Nations and the international community, the United States is providing nearly \$200 million in humanitarian assistance through established international humanitarian and non-governmental organizations to support the urgent humanitarian needs of those inside Syria and in neighboring countries who are affected by the continuing violence in Syria. As the winter approaches, we are coordinating closely with the Coalition and civilian groups inside Syria to ensure that our assistance best serves the needs of the Syrian people. We continue to develop ways for humanitarian assistance to reach previously inaccessible areas inside Syria. All humanitarian assistance is provided on the basis of need and not political affiliation.
- The United States is also providing approximately \$50 million in non-lethal support to the unarmed Syrian opposition and civil society groups, including local councils and grassroots organizations. This assistance provides training and equipment to the Syrian non-violent opposition to build up a nation-wide network of ethnically and religiously diverse civilian activists, which will help promote unity among the Syrian people and accelerate the country's democratic transition. It builds the capacity of local councils and grassroots organizations and supports their efforts to respond to the needs of their communities and mobilize ongoing non-violent protest movements. Finally, our assistance includes support for independent media, efforts to document abuses of the regime, and transition planning.

Diplomatic Support

The United States was actively engaged in the Doha meetings in late November, which launched the Syrian Opposition Coalition. In subsequent meetings and at the upcoming Friends of the Syrian People meeting that will gather in Marrakesh in mid-December, the United States is supporting efforts to strengthen the Syrian peoples' leadership of the transition underway. To ensure that our assistance responds to the most pressing needs of the Syrian people, we are closely coordinating with the Coalition and Syrian-based unarmed opposition groups.

Humanitarian Assistance

The Assad regime's war on its own civilian population has precipitated a critical humanitarian crisis, with an estimated 40,000 killed over the past 20 months. The United States is providing nearly \$200 million in humanitarian aid to assist the four million people in need inside Syria and the more than 460,000 Syrian refugees now living in neighboring countries. The U.S. funds are providing urgently needed food, clean water, medical supplies, emergency medical care, and mental health support for children. The United States is also providing relief supplies, such as plastic

sheeting to repair damaged buildings, warm clothes, blankets and heaters to help conflict-affected families survive the coming winter. Details of United States' humanitarian support to the Syrian people are regularly updated and can be found at: www.usaid.gov/crisis/syria.

Transition Support to the Unarmed Opposition

The United States has committed \$50 million to strengthen the capacity of Syria's unarmed opposition groups to facilitate a Syrian-led political transition. These resources aim to help Syrian non-violent opposition groups sustain their activities through strengthening civil society, media and democratic transition planning.

Support to civil society groups and local councils includes efforts to train, equip and build the capacity of grassroots activists and opposition groups – including women and youth – primarily inside the country; develop existing and emerging groups' abilities to mobilize citizens, share information and build networks, provide services to their communities, and undertake civic functions; support interreligious and communal dialogues to encourage strong citizen participation in shaping the transition's trajectory; develop women's leadership capacity to play a robust role in the transition; support professional human rights documentation and transitional justice workshops, and prepare for Syria's political transition and lay the foundation for future accountability efforts.

Support to independent media projects includes community radio stations providing information for refugees about available services, training for networks of citizen journalists, bloggers, and cyber-activists to support their ability to document, package, and disseminate information on developments inside Syria and provide independent news reporting; and technical assistance and equipment to enhance the information and communications security of Syrian activists within Syria.

Assistance in support of democratic transition planning includes efforts to facilitate linkages between unarmed opposition elements inside Syria with supporters outside the country;

resources to help establish the Syria Justice and Accountability Center as an independent entity that documents human rights abuses and coordinates transitional justice and accountability efforts among Syrian and international groups; and facilitating Syrian activists' participation in political and economic transition planning, to facilitate the active engagement of the business community in transition processes, and technical assistance to emerging political parties within the country.

Related article:

[Panetta Discusses Syria Situation, Sequestration](#) (12-06-2012)

5. [State's Burns on U.S. Middle East Policy](#) (12-08-2012)

Remarks by William J. Burns Deputy Secretary at Manama Dialogue, Manama, Bahrain

Thank you, John. It's a pleasure to be back in Manama. It's an honor to join Senator McCain and Congressman Ruppertsberger on this panel, and an honor once again to be hosted by the IISS, an institution for which I have the greatest respect.

We live in a rapidly changing world, in which American interests are pulled in many directions. The Asia-Pacific region, surely the most dynamic part of the global economy in the new century unfolding before us, compels our attention. So does the transformation of the global energy market, and the emergence of our own Hemisphere as a bigger and bigger player. And it is a truism that America's chief foreign policy challenge is domestic renewal, strengthening our home-grown capacity to compete and promote our interests and values around the world. That is equally true for many of the countries represented in this hall today.

For all the logical focus on "pivots" in other directions, however, the fact remains that the United States cannot afford to neglect what's at stake in the Middle East, a region in the midst of transformations every bit as profound and consequential as the changes which swept over Europe and Eurasia two decades ago. It hardly seems that it was only a little less than two years ago that a desperate Tunisian street vendor, tired of too many indignities and too many lost hopes, set fire to himself and sparked a set of changes still burning across an entire region. It's a region today that is full of both threat and promise. It's a region that demands continued American leadership, despite the pull of other challenges and the natural policy fatigue that comes after a decade in which our national security strategy was dominated by wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

To frame a quick look at the United States and the region in the years ahead, let me make just a few general observations. Stability is not a static phenomenon in the Middle East, and no society is immune from the pressures which have already swept away a number of sclerotic regimes. It's important to use a wide lens in pursuing regional security – the focus of the Manama Dialogue – and to understand that enduring security is only partly about military levers and military partnerships and counter-terrorism cooperation, as crucial as those tools are. It's also about complementary priorities, about the pursuit of political openness, economic opportunity, and the resolution of regional conflicts – about a broad, positive agenda that makes clear what we stand for, not just what we stand against; an agenda that makes clear not just the ruinous costs of extremism, but the genuine possibilities of peaceful change; an agenda that offers a powerful antidote to terrorists and their patrons, who can only tear things down, not build anything up.

It's important for Americans, self-absorbed as we sometimes are, to understand that the Middle East is not all about us. The changes unleashed over the past two years, at their core, are about a thirst for dignity and opportunity in a region which for far too long has offered far too little of either. But if it's not about us, the future of the region certainly matters a great deal to us. That why clear-eyed, determined American leadership remains so important, in partnership with friends inside and outside the region.

A successful, long-term American strategy in the Middle East is not an à la carte menu. We don't have the luxury of focusing on only one priority and ignoring others. It seems to me that there are at least four inter-connected elements to effective American policy.

First is security, and in particular meeting the urgent challenges posed by Iran's reckless behavior across a wide front, and the related imperative of accelerating a transition to the new leadership which the Syrian people so deeply deserve. We share with the rest of the international community a profound concern about Iran's continuing refusal to meet its nuclear obligations, and a profound commitment to intensifying economic and political pressure until it does – pressure which has already resulted in a fifty percent drop in the value of Iran's currency and a similar drop in oil exports. As Secretary Clinton made clear again last week, the United States is ready for a serious negotiation, along with our P5+1 partners, if Iran is serious about meeting its international obligations. But time for negotiation is growing short, given the worrisome pace of Iran's nuclear program and mounting regional and international concerns. Meanwhile, beyond the nuclear issue, we see a continuing pattern of Iranian and Iranian-proxy threats around the world, from Bangkok to Bulgaria, and especially in this region.

Nowhere is this threat more acute today than in Syria, where Iran continues to prop up the bloody and repressive rule of Bashar al-Asad. The longer the conflict in Syria continues, the greater the human tragedy for the Syrian people -- and the greater the danger of spillover into a neighborhood which already has more than its share of problems and insecurity. The United States welcomes and

strongly supports the new Syrian Opposition Coalition which emerged last month, several of whose courageous representatives are here with us today. We have provided over \$250 million in humanitarian and non-lethal assistance, and worked hard to achieve this week's positive NATO decision to deploy Patriots to help meet Turkey's security needs. The balance on the ground is clearly shifting against the regime, and Secretary Clinton looks forward at next week's Ministerial meeting in Marrakesh to considering further ways in which we can speed a genuine transition of power, and help the Syrian Opposition Coalition and our international partners prepare for the huge challenge of ensuring a stable, democratic future for Syria. We also look forward to continuing to do all we can to support the efforts of UN Envoy Brahimi to launch a political transition to a new leadership, based on the Geneva framework developed last summer.

Another persistent security challenge is the effort of terrorists and violent extremists to hijack the promise of regional change and take advantage of popular frustrations. In the face of militant groups who threaten us all, counter-terrorism cooperation remains a high priority.

A second element of American strategy across the region is continued support for political openness, democratic reforms, and successful post-revolutionary transitions. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to such transitions or reform processes; much will depend on local circumstances and the quality of local leadership. The United States, for its part, will consistently emphasize the importance of respect for the rule of law; of peaceful and inclusive political processes; of protecting the fundamental rights of all citizens -- including women and minorities and people of all faiths; and of steady focus on building strong democratic institutions and real checks and balances.

In societies which have gone through revolutions, we'll try to be plainspoken about our concerns. In Egypt, President Obama and Secretary Clinton have been direct in emphasizing the importance of peaceful, inclusive dialogue, genuine give and take, and forward-looking compromise in navigating toward the strong, democratic constitution promised by the Egyptian revolution -- while also emphasizing the risks of continued unrest and uncertainty. For all its obvious fragility, Libya's transition deserves our sustained support. So does Tunisia's, and Yemen's. Nor can we afford to neglect Iraq, or the significance of its continued reintegration into the Arab world.

We also will continue to support the efforts of our friends in Morocco, Jordan, and Bahrain to stay ahead of the wave of change sweeping the region, and keep pace with their people's expectations and aspirations. Bahrain is a valued strategic partner and a longtime friend. Under the leadership of King Hamad, Bahrain has begun to implement the recommendations of the independent commission of inquiry. There is still a long road ahead, and I know it is not easy. But as Crown Prince Salman stressed last night, it is crucial to move decisively down that path, without violence from any quarter. Long-term stability, and enduring security, depend upon the full participation of all citizens in political and economic life; the belief of all citizens that their peacefully-expressed views are heard and respected; the conviction of all citizens that they share a stake in their country's future.

Third, no political transition or democratic reform process can succeed without a sense of economic possibility. Economic revival in Egypt, for example, is essential to sustained democratic change. Hard choices about domestic economic reform are part of the answer. So are generous conventional assistance programs. But we must also think more ambitiously over the coming few years about expanded trade and market access arrangements between the U.S., Europe and regional countries; about expanded support for educational programs in regional societies where empowering very young populations with the knowledge and skills to compete effectively is critical to future stability; and about expanded programs to strengthen small and medium-sized enterprises,

such as the Enterprise Funds in Egypt and Tunisia which Senator McCain has done so much to create.

Our long-term goal should be societies in which getting ahead depends less on who you know and more on what you know; and in which economic growth is revived and spread widely across populations, not just monopolized by a tiny minority at the top. An economic awakening has to be at the heart of the Arab Awakening, so that the entire region can compete more effectively in the global economy. As President Obama pointed out last year, if you take out energy exports, this region of 400 million people exports roughly the same amount as Switzerland. It is deeply in all of our interests for that to change.

A fourth element of strategy is a re-energized effort to resolve regional conflicts, especially renewing hope for a two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians. I won't belabor the point, except to stress my view that the status quo between Palestinians and Israelis is unsteady and combustible, and ultimately unsustainable. UN General Assembly resolutions don't bring a two-state solution closer. Israeli settlement activity continues to corrode and undermine hopes for the only workable solution -- two states for two peoples, a viable Palestine and a secure Israel. It's time also to revive the promise of the Arab Peace Initiative, launched a decade ago and long-neglected. Progress toward a stable, secure future for the Middle East depends significantly upon progress towards Israeli-Palestinian peace, and it's a mistake to ignore that complicated reality.

Pursuit of an American strategy in the region based on the four elements I've very briefly described is much easier said than done. I'm not naïve about the huge pitfalls on the road ahead. There is nothing automatic or foreordained about the success of post-revolutionary transitions or democratic reform processes, and there are many forces eager to hijack their promise. As President Obama and Secretary Clinton have emphasized, American engagement, American vision, and American leadership across the problems of this endlessly fascinating but endlessly complicated region are as important as ever. Our influence has obvious limits, but we're far better off continuing to work with people and leaderships across the Middle East who want to shape trends and events in a positive direction, than we are if we simply wait for them to be shaped for us. Thank you.

6. Clinton Urges European Partners to Strengthen Security (12-06-2012)

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is calling on the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to strengthen its capacity to promote peace and security, champion democracy and defend universal human rights and dignity.

“As we approach the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, it is important to remember that those accords and this organization that sprang from them affirmed an inextricable link between the security of states and the security of citizens,” Clinton said in remarks to the OSCE Ministerial Council in Dublin December 6. “They codified universal rights and freedoms that belong to all citizens, and those commitments empowered and encouraged dissidents to work for change.”

The secretary said the OSCE has a long legacy of defending fundamental freedoms for people everywhere.

“This year alone, the OSCE sent observer missions to monitor 17 different elections, including in my own country,” Clinton said.

She said the organization's efforts helped to ensure a largely free, fair and peaceful election in Serbia and a peaceful transfer of power in Georgia.

"And throughout the region, the OSCE continues to advance a comprehensive approach to security that makes a difference in people's lives," the secretary said.

Clinton said the work of creating a Europe that is whole, free and at peace remains unfinished. She said that meetings with civil society leaders from across the region revealed a number of growing challenges, including new restrictions on human rights, new pressures on journalists and new assaults on nongovernmental organizations.

"I urge all of us to pay attention to their concerns," she said, citing the importance of addressing issues ranging from protecting freedom of expression and religion to preventing discrimination against vulnerable populations.

"Every participating state, including the United States, has room for improvement," Clinton said. "The work of building a democracy and protecting human rights is never done, and one of the strengths of the OSCE has been that it provides a forum for discussing this challenge and making progress together."

The secretary called on the organization's membership to work together to address common challenges and achieve shared goals in the 21st century.

"This is the time for the OSCE to once again take up the mantle of leadership, to push forward the frontiers of human rights and dignity and to reaffirm the values and principles that have guided this organization ever since its founding," Clinton concluded.

The secretary's stop in Dublin comes as part of a five-day European tour. She previously visited Prague and Brussels, and is due to travel to Belfast, Northern Ireland, before returning to Washington December 7.

[Clinton Calls for More Work to Consolidate Northern Ireland Peace](#) (12-07-2012)

[Human Rights Linked to Economic Growth and Security, Clinton Says](#) (12-06-2012)

[Clinton on "Making Human Rights a Human Reality"](#) (12-06-2012)

7. U.S., Iraq Sign Defense Cooperation Memo of Understanding (12-06-2012)

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6, 2012 – American and Iraqi officials signed a memorandum of understanding today in Baghdad that will make it easier for the two countries to work together.

The memo was one result of the Defense and Security Joint Coordination Committee that met yesterday and today in the Iraqi capital.

Undersecretary of Defense for Policy James N. Miller, acting Iraqi Defense Minister Saadoun al-Dlimi and acting Undersecretary of State for International Security Rose Gottemoeller participated in the meeting.

The committee discussed efforts to strengthen security cooperation between the two nations, officials said. This includes enhancing Iraq's security capabilities and modernizing Iraqi forces. Officials looked at the U.S. foreign military sales program. Iraq is buying F-16 Fighting Falcon

aircraft and M-1 Abrams tanks from the United States, among other programs. These procurements include spare parts, training, maintenance help and other considerations.

The officials also discussed regional issues and the ongoing conflict in neighboring Syria, defense officials said.

The memorandum of understanding -- signed by Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and Dlimi -- covers the range of U.S.-Iraqi defense cooperation and covers the next five years. This includes high-level military-to-military visits, professional military education cooperation, counterterrorism cooperation and the development of defense intelligence capabilities.

The two nations committed to joint exercises including exchanges of information dealing with humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, officials said.

Biographies:
[James N. Miller](#)

Related Sites:
[DOD News Release](#)

8. Clinton Applauds NATO for Global Security Cooperation (12-05-2012)

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and her counterparts from the NATO alliance discussed a wide range of global economic, security and political issues during a meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Brussels.

“The alliance has made great strides and we’ve seen, just in the past 24 hours, how much ground member states can cover when we are working together,” Clinton said at NATO headquarters December 5. “It proves once again why this alliance is one of the greatest forces for security and stability in history.”

The secretary said the 28-member organization dealt with issues affecting every corner of the globe during the two-day ministerial.

During a meeting of the North Atlantic Council, the principal political decision-making body within NATO, members agreed to augment Turkey’s air defenses to protect against the threat of missiles from Syria. Clinton said the United States expects to make a contribution to the NATO mission.

The December 4 meeting of the NATO-Russia Council covered the group’s extensive cooperation with Russia in places like Afghanistan. Clinton said members also spoke frankly about areas of disagreement between NATO and Russia, including Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and the need for a political transition in Syria.

The secretary said members also met with their non-NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) partners to review the situation in Afghanistan as the transition to 2014 continues, when Afghan forces will have full responsibility for Afghanistan’s security and U.S. and ISAF forces will take a supporting role.

“We discussed the need for an efficient, transparent, accountable mechanism to channel the international community’s contributions to the Afghan forces,” Clinton added.

She said the NATO-Georgia Commission meeting offered a chance to continue the conversation with Georgia about progress it needs to make to join NATO, including continuing to strengthen democratic institutions, reforming the armed forces and contributing to global security.

“When you take a step back and consider all the important issues that we covered in a single ministerial meeting here at NATO, it reveals, again, how critical our alliance is,” Clinton said. The U.S. finds it “extremely valuable to be able to consult closely with our European allies on challenges from Syria to the Middle East to North Korea.”

Since its start more than 60 years ago, Clinton said, NATO continues to keep the world safe and to project security and stability around the world.

“We believe it’s needed more than ever, and, therefore, we believe we all must continue to invest in it politically, financially, diplomatically ... because these investments are worth it,” the secretary said.

Clinton’s attendance at the meeting was her last as secretary, as she plans to step down from her post early in 2013.

[Clinton at NATO Headquarters in Brussels](#)
[NATO Secretary-General Rasmussen’s Press Conference](#)
